

Operationalizing Coalitions of the Future

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Operationalizing Coalitions of the Future.

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THESIS: Specific operational staff structures, procedures, and plans must be developed in order to address the issue of military cooperation amongst a coalition's members.

DISCUSSION: Many trends in the future of warfighting have been identified and discussed but few are as fundamental as the trend towards multinational operations. In responding to future crises the military will be required to cooperate at the operational level with other nations in order to provide international legitimacy for military actions. This quest for international legitimacy will require military planners to develop operational options that allow all coalition members to effectively participate. Simply dividing the area of operations into different sectors for each coalition member is not enough. To truly achieve the potential synergistic effects of a coalition it will be necessary to alter staff organizations and procedures in order to harmonize the utilization of each coalition member's capabilities. The capabilities that the various nations offer to a coalition will be varied and disparate. One cooperating nation may be able to provide forces that can conduct ground operations but lacks logistical sustainment capability and a means of strategic projection. Another might only be able to provide maritime forces but lacks the means to sustain them. Another nation might be willing to provide extremely capable forces but chooses for political reasons to limit the actions in which they can participate. The question of how these disparate forces and capabilities are brought together to conduct cohesive military operations is currently left to the operational military headquarters. This additional responsibility has required operational staffs to create international cooperation structures that normally find ad hoc measures to achieve integration. With the growing importance of multinational operations this structure is not adequate, efficient, or acceptable. Specific operational staff structures, procedures, and plans must be developed in order to address the issue of military cooperation amongst a coalition's members.

CONCLUSION: Coalition operations are too complicated to be hastily planned. They also must leverage all the coalition capabilities across the spectrum of national powers. This level of cooperation requires the development of a standing organization that facilitates the regional cooperation of interested nations. This organization would align coalition objectives and theater engagement plans during pre-crisis periods as well as organize crisis response initiatives.

The year is 2005 and a crisis is emerging in the African nation of Sudan. A severe drought has devastated the country and created famine conditions that are beyond the Sudanese government's ability to handle. This humanitarian tragedy has attracted the attention of the international community, which has been attempting to organize an appropriate response over the last 6 months. The crisis in Sudan has been recently compounded by the actions of Islamic rebel groups who have used the humanitarian crisis and the international community's slow response as an excuse to renew their effort to establish a Muslim nation. The rebels have threatened to take over the Sudanese government and then spread their revolt to their regional neighbors Egypt and Ethiopia. The rebels feel this would not only allow them to join forces with their Arab brothers but also give them international prominence through their control over the Red Sea and Suez Canal. The threat posed to regional stability combined with the deepening humanitarian crisis demands a response from the international community. Many countries have offered to support a response. Japan has offered monetary support as well as logistic capabilities to support the distribution of food but due to national restrictions cannot participate in actions against the rebels. France has activated their RECOMP¹ program and is willing to participate in all phases of the response. Pakistan has offered to support the effort by providing mechanized infantry units but does not have the strategic transportation assets to project them into the theater and then sustain them. Bangladesh has offered to send as many infantry battalions as required but also lacks strategic transportation. U.S. Central Command immediately began organizing the response from its headquarters in Florida and also began deployment of JTF Sudan. JTF Sudan was not only intended to serve as the operational headquarters for the U.S. effort but also to assume control of the other coalition forces as the combined headquarters. Events outpaced the deployment of JTF Sudan and forward deployed Marines were committed to conduct a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation. Other nations also projected forces into the theater to protect their interests and ultimately participate in the international response. The Marines and

U.S. Special Forces immediately came into contact with French and British forces deployed in Sudan as each pursued accomplishment of their national taskings. The rebels thwarted humanitarian relieve efforts as well as evacuation efforts by encouraging civil unrest in the urban areas and menacing light infantry forces with their small arms. Meanwhile U.S. airpower assets searched in vain for targets only to return their bomb-loads to their Forward Operating Base, which was well protected by the Bangladeshi infantry battalions and Pakistani mechanized units. Mounting casualties and cost ultimately led to the dissolution of the Sudan coalition without resolving the rebel insurgency or the widespread famine.

This fictional example highlights the difficulties involved in organizing and then operationalizing an international response to an emerging crisis. Many trends in the future of warfighting have been identified and discussed but few are as fundamental as the trend towards multinational operations. In responding to future crises the military will be required to cooperate at the operational level with other nations in order to provide international legitimacy for military actions. This quest for international legitimacy will require military planners to develop operational options that allow all coalition members to effectively participate. Simply dividing the area of operations into different sectors for each coalition member is not enough. To truly achieve the potential synergistic effects of a coalition it will be necessary to alter staff organizations and procedures in order to harmonize the utilization of each coalition member's capabilities. The capabilities that the various nations offer to a coalition will be varied and disparate. One cooperating nation may be able to provide forces that can conduct ground operations but lacks logistical sustainment capability and a means of strategic projection. Another might only be able to provide maritime forces but lacks the means to sustain them. Another nation might be willing to provide extremely capable forces but chooses for political reasons to limit the actions in which they can participate. The question of how these disparate

forces and capabilities are brought together to conduct cohesive military operations is currently left to the operational military headquarters. This additional responsibility has required operational staffs to create international cooperation structures that normally find ad hoc measures to achieve integration. With the growing importance of multinational operations this structure is not adequate, efficient, or acceptable. Specific operational staff structures, procedures, and plans must be developed in order to address the issue of military cooperation amongst a coalition's members. In examining this requirement some definitions and assumptions will first be established to serve as the basis for proposed changes. Next, the structural changes to military staffs that are needed to facilitate multinational military cooperation will be examined. The procedural changes that must accompany the proposed structural changes will then be outlined. Finally, the fictional Sudanese crisis will be used to illustrate how these structural and procedural changes would facilitate the operationalizing of the military aspect of a coalition strategy.

COALITIONS, ALLIANCES, AND FRIENDS: WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

How nations garner international support and thus legitimacy for a response to a crisis is currently based on three models; alliance based, mandate based, or an ad hoc coalition of nations with common objectives.

A group of allied nations can gain legitimacy for their response to a crisis by invoking an internationally recognized treaty. An alliance is formed by formal agreements between two or more nations for broad long-term objectives that further the common interests of the members². These alliances were formed during the cold war era in order to assure each member nation's security. Although this would seem like a logical basis for future crisis response initiatives, there

will probably be arguments amongst the alliance members concerning the scope of authority authorized by the agreement and whether a crisis truly threatens any member's sovereignty. Additionally, the inclusion of interested nations who are not members of the alliance could enhance the international legitimacy of a response but might be unacceptable to all of the alliance members.

The second method of gaining international legitimacy is to seek a mandate from a recognized international organization. This is frequently the role of the United Nations but could be any number of standing international bodies; Organization of American States, European Union, etc. This method can be ponderous due to the processes required to develop a consensus amongst all the national representatives. This approval process is often time consuming and the disparate regional objectives of interested nations may result in a mandate that is not adequate to deal with the situation.

The difficulties of applying cold war treaties to current crises and the friction involved in acquiring a mandate have resulted in an increased reliance upon coalitions for crisis response. A coalition is an ad hoc arrangement between two or more nations for common action³. A coalition has disadvantages as well. Unlike an alliance where a basis for military cooperation has already been established (equipment compatibility, common doctrine, etc), all aspects of cooperation between members of an ad hoc coalition must be considered and addressed in conjunction with operational planning. This additional responsibility is currently placed on the regional combatant commander according to U.S doctrine⁴. Accepting this challenging responsibility in addition to its operational warfighting responsibilities has overloaded the staff of the Combatant Commands and demands some sort of structural change to current doctrine.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

The operational aspect of an international response to a crisis is frequently based upon an ad hoc coalition. In recent history, these coalitions have been designed to optimize the utilization of high-tech capabilities possessed by only certain members of a coalition in order to overcome complicated issues of cooperation. It is only a matter of time before effective countermeasures to high-tech capabilities are developed and fielded thus negating this concept. So it is important to recognize that many future threats will not be able to be addressed by high-tech weaponry and will demand a multinational force structure that optimizes the employment of all military capabilities. Future coalitions are likely to look more like the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which consisted of 34 different countries with 11 providing infantry battalions⁵. This is not to imply that future coalitions will be less technologically advanced, but that the non-technical aspects of the coalition will be required to play a larger role. This complicates the process because the non-technical capabilities provided by each coalition member are more disparate and therefore more difficult to employ in a synergistic fashion. With the trend towards more coalition members who each provide capabilities that are not directly compatible with those of the other coalition members, it becomes evident that the responsibility for achieving effective military cooperation cannot rest solely with the operational commander. A structure is needed that will facilitate operational cooperation within a coalition.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

General Schwarzkopf, CINCCENT during Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM, recognized the need for an organization that would facilitate the integration and effective employment of the participating 37 national military contingents. He organized the Coalition Coordination, Communication and Integration Center (C³IC) in order to translate command

decisions and deconflict coalition military activities at the operational level⁶. Current joint doctrine places this responsibility on the operational commander but a more robust approach is required to ensure the smooth functioning of coalitions in the future. A system designed to facilitate multinational cooperation at every level, (strategic, operational, and tactical), across all elements of national power (diplomatic, information, military, and economic) is necessary. This responsibility must be entrusted to an organization designed for its accomplishment not simply delegated to the operational commander's staff. The general characteristics of the organization would perhaps be similar to a military staff but organized differently.

GENERAL ORGANIZATION

The current method of organizing a military staff for coalition operations involves simply taking the current staff organization (J1 – J9) and adding representatives from the coalition members. Besides changing the numbering of the staff section from J1-9 to C1-9, little is changed about the way the staff is organized. The workload is increased significantly due to the additional coordination requirements created by coalition activities. A model proposed by General Anthony Zinni to change military staff organization could also be used as a basis for organizing a coalition coordination system. He proposed a staff system that tailors the military staff to support the commander's needs based upon the situation. This organizational structure allows the staff to be adapted to their operational role.⁷. Similar to dividing a unit's command post into a rear, main, and tactical element this method of organization allows the portions of the staff requiring more infrastructure and a larger footprint to be located furthest from active operations. Reach-back technology could be leveraged to allow the commander to profit from the input of his entire staff as required. This same concept will be used to propose an organization designed to coordinate coalition operations. However, instead of dealing with a span of control

based on the current operations, future operations, and plans construct, the proposed coalition coordination structure would be designed to bridge the span between strategic, operational, and tactical aspects of combined military operations. The nature of future crisis response operations makes it impossible to divorce operational considerations from national strategic considerations therefore any organizational change must start with the strategic level.

THE STRATEGIC LEVEL - CRCC

An organization must be developed whose primary goal will be to bridge the gap between the strategic and operational level of coalition operations. The Coalition Regional Cooperation Center (CRCC) is designed to perform the same functions as the Desert Storm C³IC but with the focus on synchronizing national objectives and strategies amongst the coalition members. The CRCC would be organized on a regional basis and would meet periodically during periods of regional stability to frame national theater engagement plans, increase interoperability, and discuss regional contingency plans. Issues concerning all elements of national power must be addressed in order to ensure that the overall coalition effort is coordinated and to fully leverage the capabilities of each contributing nation. Therefore working groups will be established at the CRCC that focus on each element of national power and the role it can play in the coalition response (see figure A). This body would then propose courses of action employing all facets of national power to the various national leaders for their consideration and approval. The CRCC would be a region based standing organization that would meet quarterly to discuss the current regional situation, potential issues of concern, and deterrent strategy. Regional contingency plans would be discussed and national theater engagement plans would be synchronized with the coalition's regional strategy. To fulfill this role it is vital that the CRCC possess three attributes. First, it must be multinational in construct. There will certainly be leading nations that emerge

based on intentions and capabilities but the underlying goal must be consensus. Secondly, the CRCC must be located in the region. This will increase the level of regional awareness and facilitate the cooperation of regional experts. Its presence in the region does not imply a presence in the theater of operations. Thirdly, the CRCC must be staffed with subject matter experts in each of the elements of national power. To truly understand the conflict the CRCC Staff must combine technical expertise with regional expertise. The CRCC would be charged with performing the following functions:

- 1) Coordinate the coalition response across the combined elements of national power thus operationalizing the coalition strategy.
- 2) Refine coalition strategy based on the regional crisis situation (Appropriate ROE, definition of AO, etc).
- 3) Serve as the conduit of information between the participating nations and the operational entities.
- 4) Deconflict operational employment of various national capabilities.

Interaction between the elements of national power during the various phases of a coalition response is likely to take on a supported/supporting type relationship but the key will remain to match desired effects with appropriate capabilities. During the deterrence phase and the initial phase of a crisis response, the military aspect of national power will normally support the other arms of national power as a solution to the crisis is sought without resort to force. Should this effort fail, military force options must be prepared to react immediately. Therefore, it is vital that the CRCC possess a military planning aspect that is activated from the outset and is available to not only plan crisis response action but deterrent actions as well.

THE COALITION MILITARY ACTION COORDINATION CENTER (CMACC)

The CRCC's military working group would be structured to allow direct interaction with the operational military organizations in theater. This organization would be called the CMAcc. As its name implies, it does not serve a function of command but coordinates the participation of the various member nations in order to support the operational commander's actions and objectives. The core of the CMAcc would be based upon national military planning headquarters. The regional CINC would provide the personnel and infrastructure necessary to conduct pre-crisis planning and coordinate execution of crisis response actions. In general, the CMAcc translates the coalition strategy into operational military terms for communication to the operational commander and also communicates the operational commander's actions and in theater needs to the coalition members via the national representatives resident in the CRCC. The CMAcc would be collocated with the CRCC and leverage technology as well as liaison elements to maintain linkage with the operational commander in theater. The CMAcc would be charged with the following generic tasks:

- 1) Translation of coalition strategy into achievable military objectives.
- 2) Ensure coalition capabilities match the needs of coalition strategy.
- 3) Ensure clarity of limitations (constraints, restraints, and conditions) that are placed on military actions.

Initially the military arm of national power may not be the focus of effort but may in fact support actions based upon the other elements of national power. Whether cast in the supported or supporting role, it is vital that military planning continue in order to determine what support military activities can provide to the other elements of national power (a military blockade supporting economic sanctions), how military power might be utilized in the future (active operations, NEO's, observer missions), and the role that military power will play in the post crisis situation (exit strategy, peacekeeping force, treaty enforcement force). The current and projected military needs must be determined based upon a full understanding of the coalition

strategy and its associated military objectives. The CMAcc would assist the CRCC in determining what military capabilities would be required to achieve the various elements of the coalition strategy. These required capabilities would then be compared to the military assets committed to the effort by the coalition members. The operational commander or his representatives would need to be involved in this process that would identify any capability shortfalls that must be immediately addressed. Another product of this effort would be a catalogue of coalition forces that would document the capabilities and limitations of the various military units. The capabilities catalogue would facilitate the detailed operational planning effort by concisely documenting the limitations or conditions associated with each coalition member's military contribution.

Limitations and conditions, imposed by national governments, on the utilization of military forces should be expected. By ensuring that all factors (political, doctrinal, material, or ethical) affecting a unit's military capability are known up front they can be considered when determining how a force will be employed. National political considerations may restrict what areas the force can be deployed to, type operations it can participate in, or actions it can take. These limitations will often be expressed in the form of Rules of Engagement (ROE). The CMAcc would be responsible for defining a set of ROE that applies to all coalition forces regardless of nationality but in coalition operations this is often not entirely possible. Accepting the fact that there will be a basic Coalition ROE that will then be modified by national government concerns, it is vital that the CMAcc document the impact of these modifications for the operational commander. Equally important is the documentation of doctrinal differences or limitations. Defining each unit by their military capabilities is essential to ensuring that planners do not assume that a coalition member's military unit possesses the same capabilities as theirs. A generic military unit title may not always mean that the same set of capabilities exists between

units of two different nationalities. A U.S. and Pakistani armored battalion may be different organizationally, doctrinally, and technically but if each is evaluated based upon their inherent capabilities they could be employed in concert to achieve the desired operational effects. Thus the CMAcc's capabilities catalogue not only supports the coalition's effort to ensure that the appropriate military resources are made available to the operational commander, but also allows the operational planners to utilize the military units of the various coalition members in a manner that mitigates limitations and emphasizes capabilities. The assessment of the coalition forces and their integration with the operational headquarters would be accomplished by 4 primary organizations of the CMAcc; a Political Legal Cell, an Operations Enabler Cell, an Operations Support Cell, and a Coalition Operational Liaison Cell.

The Political Legal Cell would serve as the conduit between the military aspects of the coalition and the political leadership of the coalition members through the CRCC national representatives. This cell would be responsible for ensuring that national and international legal standards were considered in planning all phases of coalition military activities. It would also be responsible for the planning and documentation of post-conflict terms and conditions. This effort would include the preparation of cease-fires or treaties as well as the coordination of any role military forces might play in the subsequent application of international law in the theater (arrest of war criminals, etc).

The Operations Enabler Cell would be responsible for personnel and logistics issues relating to the coalition and for compiling, maintaining and distributing the coalition capabilities catalogue. The movement of forces from home station into the theater would be based upon the operational headquarters plan and would be coordinated by this cell. This cell would also coordinate coalition logistics support in order to ensure the timely arrival of required forces and

supplies into theater. It is certain that there will be a significant difference in the strategic lift capacity of the various coalition members. This would not only affect the initial projection of force but also its sustainment. The Operations Enabler Cell would coordinate the force requirements with the operational headquarters then organize the required coalition strategic lift capacity. Coalition strategic lift assets would be tasked based upon coalition rather than national priorities. Other aspects of logistics would be executed in a similar manner. It is possible that a lead nation might be designated as the executor of various parts of the process but only after initial coordination by the CMAACC.

The Operations Support Cell would be responsible for coordinating the coalition effort in support of the operational plan with respect to fires, intelligence, and command and control. In these areas the cell would ensure that the necessary assets were made available to the operational headquarters in a timely manner. A major coordination effort would be made to ensure that the intelligence gathering capabilities of the various coalition members were mutually supporting. Requests for information that require the commitment of national collection assets would be received from the operational headquarters. Individual coalition members would be asked to support the request based upon their national collection capabilities. The multinational Coalition Intelligence Center (CIC) would analyze the information gathered and provide a response to the operational headquarters. The CIC would also be responsible for vetting the intelligence products in order to assure the entire coalition that the raw intelligence data, which might not be able to be distributed to everyone, had not been manipulated. This would allow the response to the RFI's to be widely distributed while protecting the security of national intelligence collection assets. The composition of the intelligence vetting committee would have to be agreed upon in advance by the other coalition members in order for this system to function smoothly. Concerning fires coordination, the cell would be responsible for assuring that the desired platforms were made

available to the operational commander. This would include coalition fires capabilities that are air, ground, or sea based. Lead nations could be designated in any of these areas if one coalition member possessed a predominance of the assets to be utilized. The CMAcc would coordinate the basing of air assets with the other coalition members and ensure that the appropriate air platforms were organized into combined operational units. This cell would coordinate the command organization for in theater operations and the gather the required technical assets from the various coalition members. Technological capabilities would be leveraged to ensure a continuous connection between the operational headquarters and the CMAcc via the Coalition Operational Liaison Teams (COLT's).

COALITION OPERATIONAL LIAISON TEAMS

The key to relieving the operational headquarters of some of the coalition coordination responsibilities is the COLT. These multinational liaison teams would be organized by the CMAcc and attached to each of the operational units in theater. They would be tailored to interact with the operational headquarters to which they are assigned. Their role would be to ensure that the needs of operational units are communicated back to the CMAcc and that coalition decisions concerning ROE or other matters are clearly understood at the operational level. These liaison teams would be outfitted with communication capabilities to permit operational units from any coalition member to "plug in" to all elements of the coalition command and control structure. They would also be armed with both technological and human translation abilities in order to enhance understanding of coalition directives and actions. The COLT's would not only ensure coordination between the different elements of the coalition structure (CRCC, CMAcc, etc) and the operational commander but would also assist in the coordination between different operational units through communication links with other

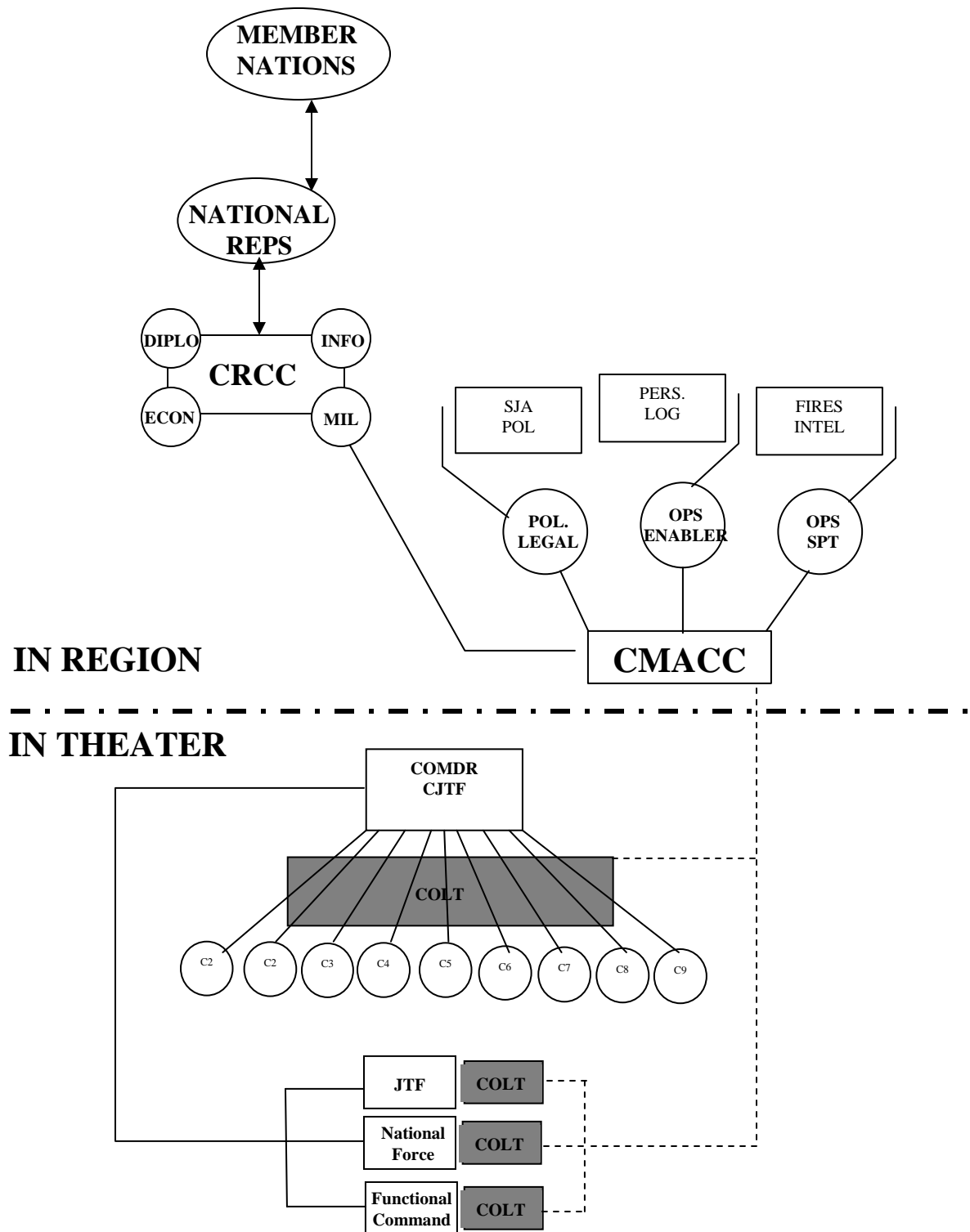
COLT's. This provides a vertical and also a horizontal aspect to their liaison mission. The COLT would be staffed with individuals who are capable of providing a blend of regional, language, technical, and administrative expertise. The COLT would be available to assist the operational commander in integrating coalition elements into his plans and also to "reach-back" to the CMAcc and CRCC for administrative support required by operational forces. In adherence with General Zinni's proposed staff model this would allow the forward deployed elements of the coalition coordination system to be heavy on operators and light on support or administrative functions.

Had a framework for operationalizing coalitions been in place in 2005 the Sudanese crisis might have never occurred or at least might have been terminated earlier. The Suez region CRCC had been monitoring the events taking place in Sudan during the previous two quarterly cooperation conferences held in Djibouti and Oman. During the last conference, coalition governments agreed to an economic based strategy to deal with the poverty and famine problem supported by a military action designed to deny the import of weaponry by the Sudanese Islamic Rebels. Should additional force be required, the coalition members designated the military forces they would make available for a crisis response. As the situation deteriorated the CRCC was established in Djibouti with the assistance of French infrastructure located there. CINC U.S. Central Command and his staff were designated to serve as the nucleus of the CMAcc and propose potential COA's in consultation with the British Operational commander. After reviewing the capabilities catalogue it became clear that certain forces would be best utilized in specific roles. The Japanese force would lead the humanitarian effort aimed at eliminating the famine. Pakistani mechanized units would augment them in order to increase their cross-country mobility and protection. Bangladeshi forces would lead the effort to secure the rear areas including major cities, ports and airfields. A strike force designated to deal with the rebels would

be comprised of French, U.S., British, and Pakistani forces. Additionally, French representatives to the CMAACC indicated that their RECAMP effort would allow a battalion of Senegalese Peacekeepers to be deployed to the region once the initial crisis was resolved. It was clearly evident that the U.S. dominance in strategic lift would have to be managed in order to support the movement of other coalition forces into the region. The CMAACC Operations Enabler Cell organized the lift priorities in conjunction with the operational commander and the other coalition logistic representatives. The Political Legal Cell ensured that the Rules of Engagement allowed the Japanese force to deliver humanitarian assistance while receiving security protection from their Pakistani mechanized contingent and other rapid reaction forces. COLT's were formed from coalition special Forces and standing headquarters. These liaison teams were formed with specific capabilities required by the gaining command and then attached to all levels of the Sudan Task Force. They were armed with communications, translation, and targeting technology that would allow horizontal as well as vertical communication and coordination. At the tactical level, this capability would allow the Japanese led humanitarian effort to profit from the precision strike capabilities of the U.S., U.K., and French forces while also clearly communicating instruction to a Pakistani led quick reaction force. At the operational level it allow the operational commander to balance the impact of all elements of the national powers of the coalition to be applied in a manner that ended the starving and defeated the Sudanese rebels.

Coalitions are likely to remain the instrument of choice for organizing an international crisis response initiative. The question is not whether they will be employed but how they will be employed; how they will be operationalized. Structural changes must be instituted to strengthen the operational commander's links to the coalition leadership and to leverage technological advances that would facilitate coordination and sharing of capabilities.

ORGANIZATIONAL DIAGRAM (Figure A)



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¹ **Renforcement de Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix** is a French military program designed to reinforce the African ability to respond to and attempt to prevent security related crises.

² Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington D.C.: Joint Staff, April 2001), 24.

³ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *DOD Dictionary*, 75.

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⁵ Trevor Findlay, Cambodia: The Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Research Report no. 9 (Oxford, Ca: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp 27-28.

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